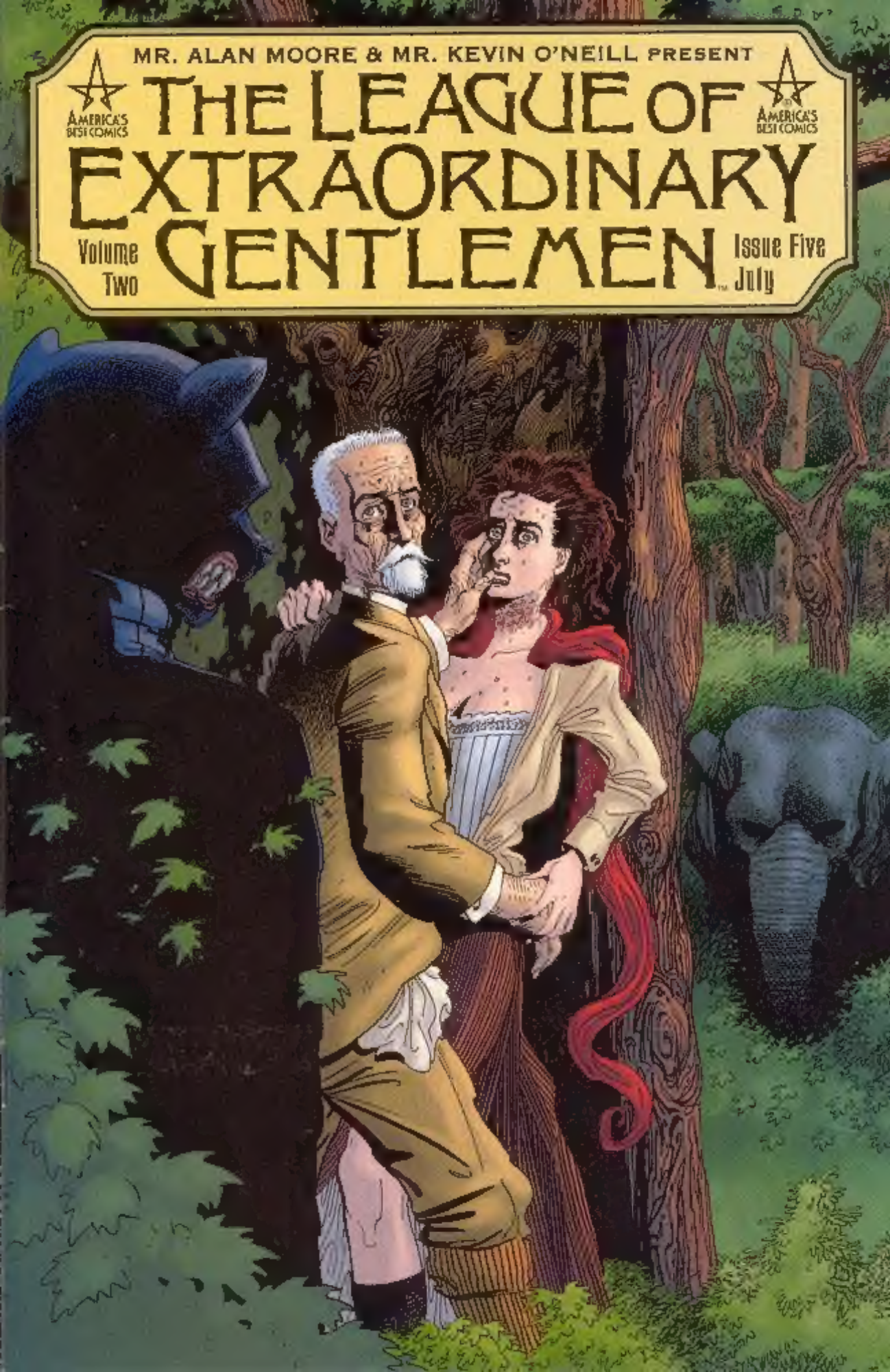
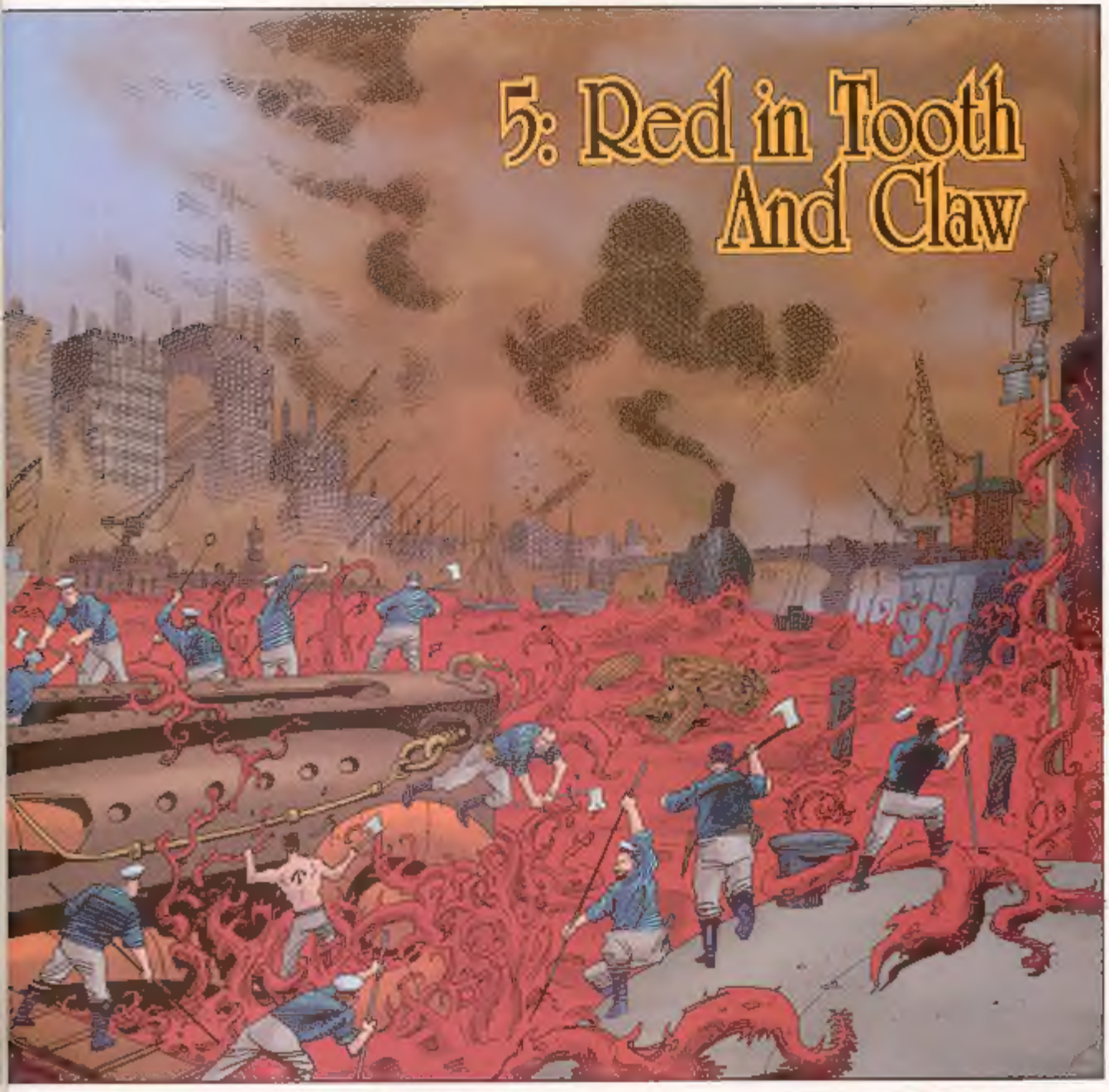

MR. ALAN MOORE & MR. KEVIN O'NEILL PRESENT
AMERICA'S BEST COMICS
THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN
AMERICA'S BEST COMICS
Volume Two
Issue Five
July

:HHHUAHH!:
Huh.
RIVER SUPPOSED TO BE LIKE THAT, IS IT?

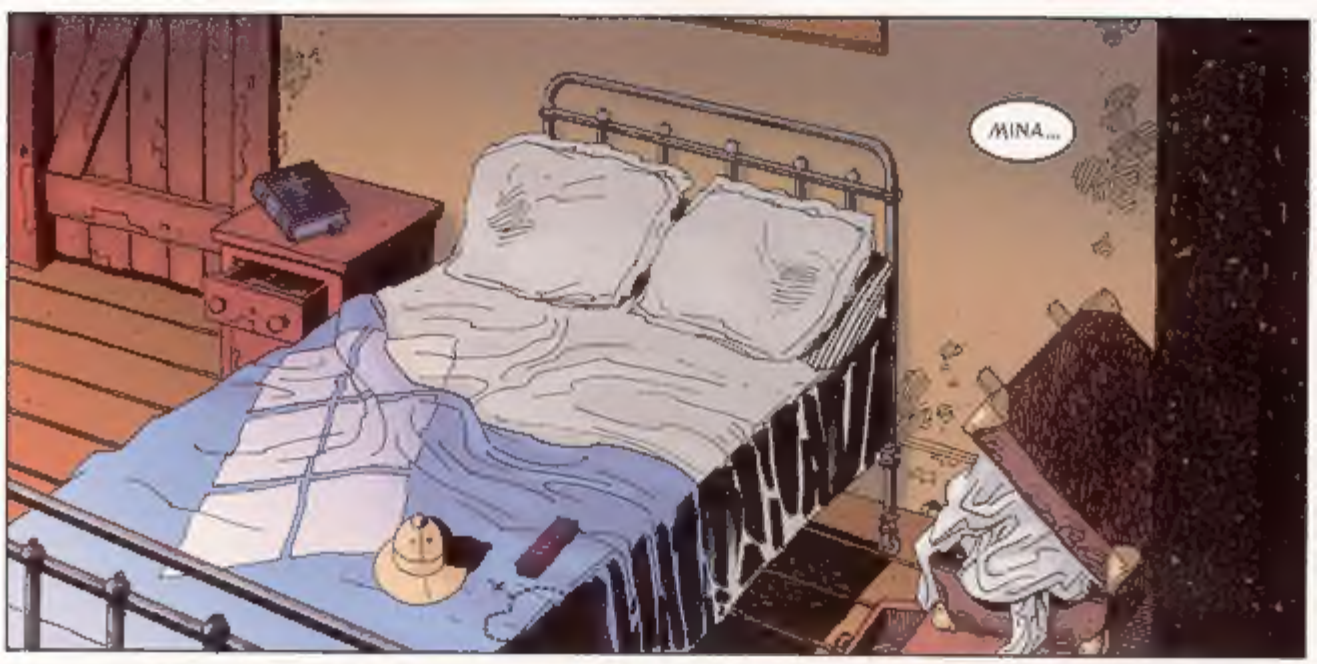
YOU KNOW THAT IT IS NOT.
DO NOT JEST WITH ME NOW, HYDE.
I AM NOT OF A MOOD FOR IT.
IT'S THE SPACE-JELLIES WHO'VE DONE THIS, THEN? ALL THIS RED MUCK.
YES. I BELIEVE IT IS SOME TYPE OF ANTI-SUB-MARINE WEAPON.
THE EFFECTIVE TYPE, FROM THE LOOK OF IT.
WELL, I'M NOT SITTING HERE ALL DAY.
WE'VE LITTLE CHOICE, UNTIL THE WEED IS CLEARED.
WHAT, AND THEN WE WAIT FOR QUATERMAIN AND MURRAY TO RETURN?
BUGGER THAT. I'M GOING INTO THE CITY, TO THE MUSEUM.

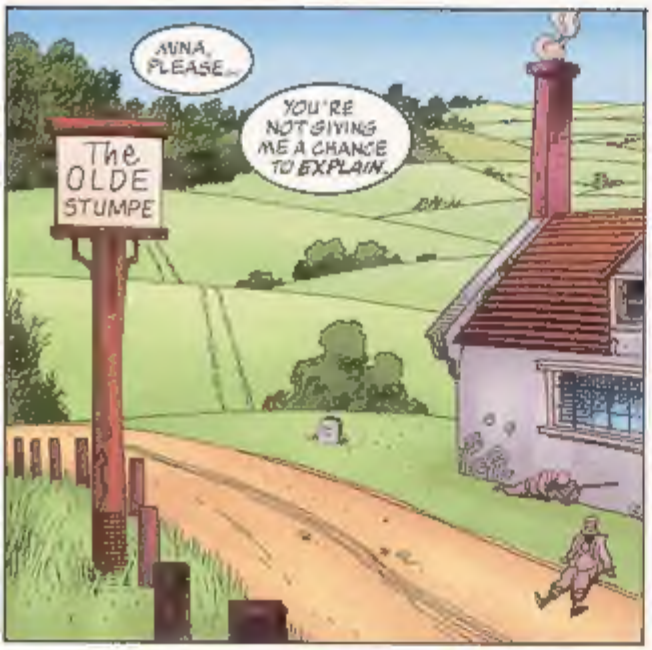
5: Red in Tooth And Claw



HYDE, YOU CAN'T WALK THROUGH LONDON, EVEN IF IT'S HALF-EVACUATED.
SAMSON WILL TAKE ME.
JOIN ME FOR DINNER THERE LATER IF YOU LIKE.

HYDE, DON'T BE STUPID. WE ABANDONED OUR MUSEUM BASE BECAUSE GRIFFIN MIGHT INFILTRATE IT.
IT PRESENTS SUCH AN EASY TARGET FOR HIM, AND...


MINA...


MINA, PLEASE...
YOU'RE NOT GIVING ME A CHANCE TO EXPLAIN.
The OLDE STUMPE

YOU'RE ASSUMING THE WORST ABOUT ME.
ABOUT MY REACTION.
TO YOUR...
INJURIES.

I MEAN, FOR GOD'S SAKE...
DO YOU REALLY THINK I'M GOING TO FLINCH FROM A FEW SCARS?
ME, OF ALL PEOPLE?

GO ON.

ALL RIGHT.
MINA, I'VE BEEN MARRIED TWICE. YOU KNOW THAT.
MY SECOND WIFE, STELLA, WAS THE MOST STRIKING, REMARKABLE WOMAN I HAD EVER KNOWN.

AS A YOUNGER WOMAN, SHE'D BEEN CAUGHT IN A *FIRE*.
IT LEFT HER WITH THE MOST DREADFUL SCARS.
THEY WERE ALL AROUND HER THROAT.

AND THE OTHER NIGHT, WHEN YOUR SCARF SLIPPED... I WASN'T *REPELLED*...
I WAS *AMAZED*, MINA.
I WAS AMAZED THAT DESTINY SHOULD SO... *DISTINGUISH*... THE TWO WOMEN I HAVE LOVED THE MOST.

OH, ALLAN.
ALLAN, I'VE BEEN SO HATEFUL TO YOU. IT'S JUST... THESE BEASTLY THINGS...
I'M SO SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT THEM, AND I THOUGHT...
LET ME SEE THEM.

What?
I WANT TO SEE YOUR SCARS. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT A DIFFICULTY BETWEEN US.
I HAVE MY FAULTS, MINA, BUT I'M A BETTER MAN THAN THAT.

I... ALLAN, I-I'VE NEVER--
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
HERE...

MM.
THERE.
OH, PLEASE.
PLEASE DON'T.
THEY'RE SO HIDEOUS. TH-THEY...
MINA...
THEY'RE PART OF YOU.
PART OF YOUR BODY, YOUR PAST, WHO YOU ARE...
MINA, THERE'S NO PART OF YOU THAT IS NOT BEAUTIFUL.
ALLAN, Y-YOU DON'T KNOW. I'M...
OH GOD. OH GOD, ALLAN...
Ummm.
OWH.
OH, YES.

OH. OHHHH.
J-JONATHAN, MY HUSBAND, HE WOULDN'T TOUCH ME AFTER I--
Mmmm.
THEN HE WAS A DAMNED FOOL, HOWEVER YOU GOT THEM.
THEY'RE LIKE A NECKLACE, DECORATING YOUR BREASTS.
MINA, I WANT TO-**** YOU.
WHAT... HERE?
A-AMONG THE TREES... AND THE WILD ANIMALS?
AS IF I WERE SOME... NATIVE GIRL?
I-I QUITE FORBID IT.
OH, SO YOU'RE A JUNGLE PRINCESS NOW?
DID YOU REALLY READ ALL THOSE YARNS ABOUT ME?
EVERY ONE.
JUST A MOMENT.
I'LL DO THAT.
MINA, YOU DON'T KNOW HOW I'VE LONGED FOR THIS.
YES, I DO. HURRY, ALLAN. THROW THOSE STUPID THINGS AWAY.
MINA, THIS IS...
HUSH, NOW. I WANT YOU TO HAVE YOUR WAY WITH ME. HERE, LET ME...
OH, YES. OH, THAT'S SO NICE.
OHHH!
OH, GODDO...
AOH-OH, ALLAN.
Unhh. UNHH.
M-MINA, I'M NOT GOING TO LAST LONG, I... uhh..
IT'S ALL RIGHT. IT'S ALL RIGHT. OHH, GOD.
DO IT NOW. PLEASE...
AAAA!
AAAA!
AAHHH!

EEAAAHH!
OH, YES! YES...
GOD, MINA, YOU'RE SO ABANDONED...
GET OFF ME! GET OFF ME, YOU IDIOT!
LOOK!
Whu...

OH, DEAR GOD.
MINA, RUN! I-I'LL HOLD IT OFF!
NOT TO RUN! NOT TO RRRUN!
ALLAN, NO! IT'S...
URRNGH.
NO! LEAVE HIM, YOU BRUTE! LEAVE HIM ALONE!
OH, GOD...
MINA, GET AWAY! GET AWAY WHILE IT'S OCCUPIED WITH ME!
A-ALLAN, I CAN'T...
IN GOD'S NAME, WOMAN, JUST GO!
NO-
YOU COME.
YOU COME US.

I INVITED THE DARKETE TO JOIN ME HERE FOR DINNER
AND DRINKS BEFORE THE FOOD
WHY ARE YOU HERE ANYWAY? YOU DON'T STRIKE ME AS THE MUSEUM SORT
I SIMPLY CAN'T LET THINGS GO. DO YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
FREEZE
FREEZE

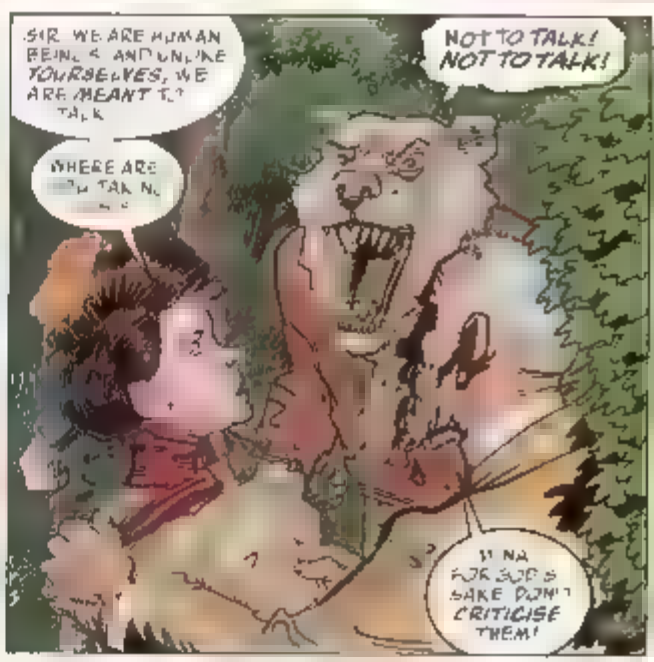
HERE NOW

Tum tum tum tum te tum
Hmmm
Huh huh huh
HURRRH hur hur hur
YOU KNOW THIS S REALLY QU TE FUNNY
YOU RE THINKING "IF I DON'T MAKE ANY NOISE, HE WON T KNOW I A HERE "
HAHAHAHARRR!
NOW YOU RE NKING HAHA
NOW YOU RE TH KK NG, "HE S BLUFFING
BUT I M NOT, GRIFFIN I PROM SE YOU I M NOT
YOU HAVE MY WORD AS A GENTLEMAN

AH WELL
I SUPPOSE WE MAY AS WELL GET THINGS STARTED
OH GR FFIN COME ON. I KNOW YOU RE HERE I CAN SEE YOU
I VE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO SEE YOU
KEEPING QUIET S NO USE
TH S
TH S SN'T FA R
NO I SUPPOSE NOT
KUAHH.
HUHUHUH
TH S S YOUR ARM SN'T IT? NO NO MY M STAKE IT'S YOUR LEG.
OH GOD, OH GOD, HYDE, PLEASE. DON'T
YEEAAAAA!
AAAA!
AHUHUHUH OH GOD, PLEASE HYDE I M SORRY I M S, ERY
M DEAR CHAP PLEASE DON'T APOLOGISE NO HARM DONE EH?
UP YOU ME
UHHHHNN OH PLEASE PLEASE DON'T KILL ME
DON'T WORRY GR FFIN. I WON NOT FOR AGES
I JUST WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHIN
THERE TAKE A LOOK AT THAT LONDON
MARVELOUS VIEW, DON T YOU THINK?
NHUHUHUHN PLEASE, HYDE PLEASE

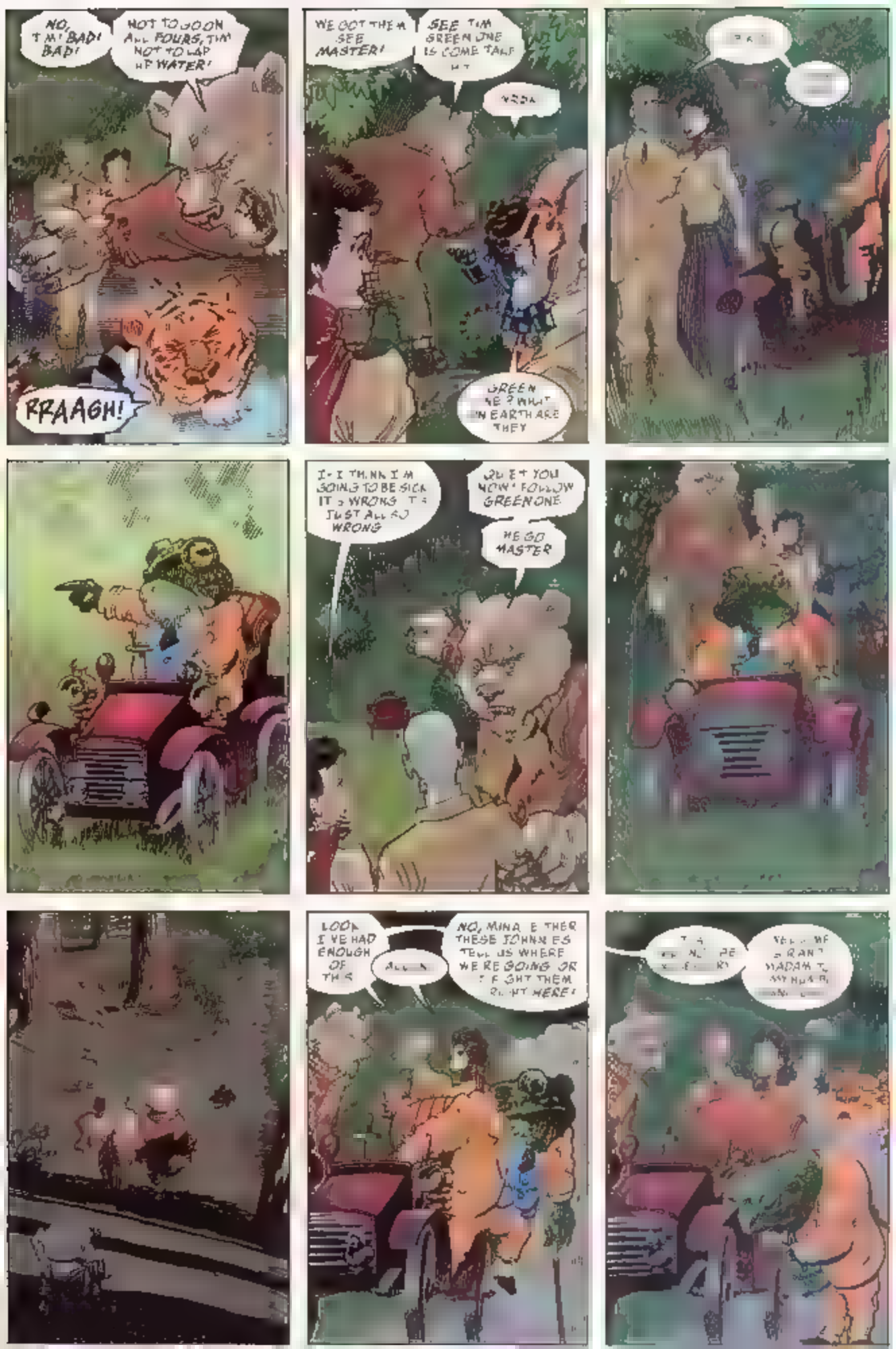
STOP SAYING THAT
STOP SAYING PLEASE YOU TREACHEROUS LITTLE SHIT
AAAAGH!
YOU BETRAYED US ALL FOR A LOT OF SLUGS, DIDN'T YOU?
DIDN'T YOU?!
AAA! AA, GOD! YES, YES - BETRAYED YOU
YES YOU DID. BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I AM CROSS.
I AM CROSS BECAUSE YOUR TREATMENT OF MISS MURRAY WAS UNCIVIL
GET ON THE FLOOR
HYDE
GET ON THE FLOOR
YOU KNOW, GRIFFIN, WE'RE VERY LUCKY YOU AND I. I MEAN, LOOK AT ALL THIS
WHAT MORE COULD WE ASK FOR, ER? OPULENT SURROUNDINGS FINE WINES -
Romance
HYDE? A DE GOOD GOD W WHAT ARE YOU
UMM OH YES
DO YOU KNOW I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I FELT SO CHIPPER
THIS IS THE LIFE. EH, GRIFFIN?
AAAAAA! AAAAAA!!
IS THE LIFE

DEAR GOD. WHAT HAVE WE BLUNDERED INTO?
QUIET! NOT TO TALK!


SIR, WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS AND UNLIKE YOURSELVES, WE ARE MEANT TO TALK
NOT TO TALK! NOT TO TALK!
FOR GOD'S SAKE DON'T CRITICISE THEM!

I DON'T SEE WHY NOT IF THEY INSIST ON BEHAVING LIKE BEASTS THEY MUST EXPECT TO BE TREATED AS SUCH
NOT BEASTS
YOU DON'T TALK

WELCOME TO THE US, SEE MASTER
URRNHZ

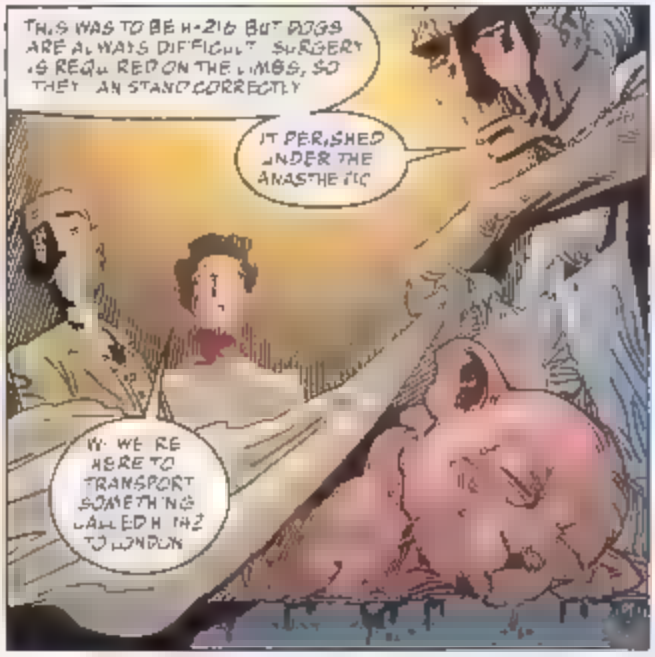

NO, TIM! BAD! BAD!
NOT TO SOON ALL FOURS, TIM NOT TO LAP UP WATER!
RRAAGH!
WE GOT THEM SEE MASTER!
SEE TIM GREEN ONE IS COME TALK HIM
WOOA
GREEN ONE? WHAT IN EARTH ARE THEY
I- I THINK I M GOING TO BE SICK IT S WRONG T S JUST ALL SO WRONG
QUIET YOU NOW! FOLLOW GREEN ONE
HE GO MASTER
LOOK I VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS
NO, MINA E THER THESE JOHNNIES TEW US WHERE WE RE GOING OR F GHT THEM R GHT HERE!

I AM ALPHONSE MORPEAU
HOW MAY I HELP YOU?
I TAKE IT YOU ARE THE DOCTOR WE SEEK?
SIR WE ARE AGENTS OF THE CROWN AND
YES SO I HAD GATHERED THAT IS WHY I HAD HIM AND HIS MEN BRING YOU TO ME
HOW YOU MEAN THAT BEAR THING?
OF COURSE THE H STANDS FOR HYBRID. DIDN'T OUR MASTER TELL YOU?
HE... BRING OUR GUESTS SOME FOOD WOULD YOU?
YES, MASTER ALBY GET FOOD NOW

A PUG-DOG NAMED BLE
LOOK MOREAU OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS. HOW DID YOU KNOW WE'D BEEN SENT BY THE GOVERNMENT TO FIND YOU ?
H-9 OVERHEARD YOU TALKING ABOUT ME HIS ENGLISH IS QUITE GOOD

AS FOR THE GOVERNMENT WHO ELSE KNOWS I EXIST? THEY REPOSITIONED ME HERE WHEN THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES AT MY PREVIOUS ESTABLISHMENT
I BASE COME THROUGH
H-9 TELLS ME THAT YOU MET WITH FRENDRICK YESTERDAY

YES, HE SEEMS OBSESSED WITH YOU
HE IS A FORMER ACQUAINTANCE WHO HAS UNFORTUNATELY GONE MAD
MY CREATIONS KEEP HIM UNDER DISCREET OBSERVATION HE POSES NO THREAT
GOOD LORD WHAT ON EARTH IS THIS?


THIS WAS TO BE H-216 BUT DOGS ARE ALWAYS DIFFICULT SURGERY IS REQUIRED ON THE LIMBS, SO THEY CAN STAND CORRECTLY
IT PERISHED UNDER THE ANASTHETIC
WE WERE HERE TO TRANSPORT SOMETHING CALLED H 216 TO LONDON

H-42? YOU ARE SURE OF THIS?
THEN I TAKE IT THAT LONDON IS IN GRAVE DANGER
IT IS BEEN INVADED BY THINGS FROM ANOTHER WORLD PERHAPS MARS
LOOK WHOEVER YOU ARE YOU'VE GOT TO HELP US

SEE THEN WE MUST DISCUSS THIS OVER DINNER YES ?
LIKE I'VE BEEN BEING

MARVELOUS
DO YOU KNOW I M ABSOLUTELY STARVING

YOUR APPETITE A QUITE CONSIDERABLE DR JEKYLL WOULD ONLY PICK AT HIS FOOD
I NOTE WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE DOCTOR RECENTLY
GRONFF NOOO.

JEKYLL S A WEAKLING, ALL THESE MARSMEN ABOUT HE MIGHT GET ME KILLED
STRIKES ME YOU RE MORE LIKELY TO DO THAT YOURSELF

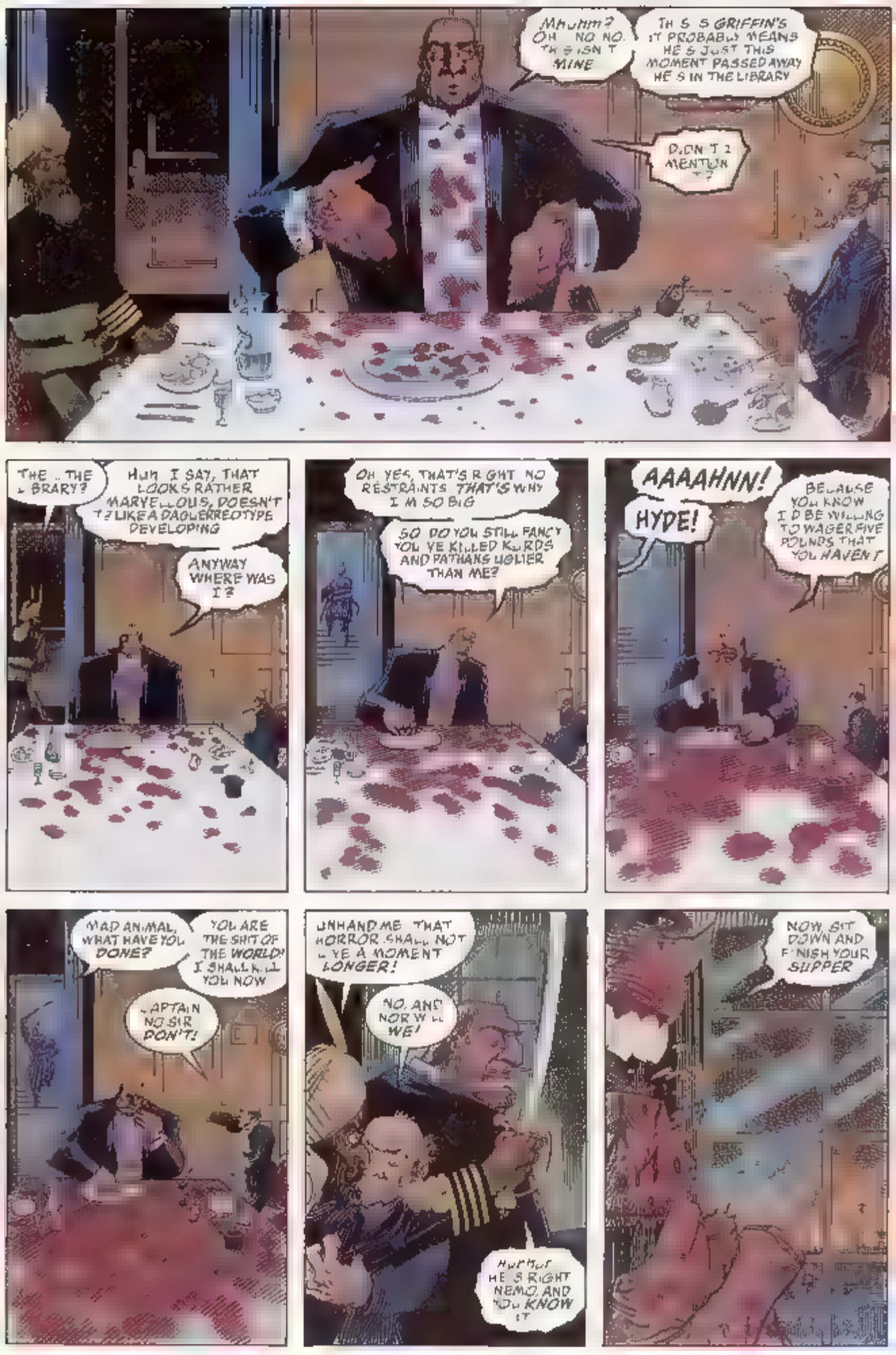
YES YES YOU RE QUITE RIGHT
BUT AT LEAST THAT WILL BE WHEN I SAY SO
I WOULDN T GIVE JEKYLL THE SATISFACTION

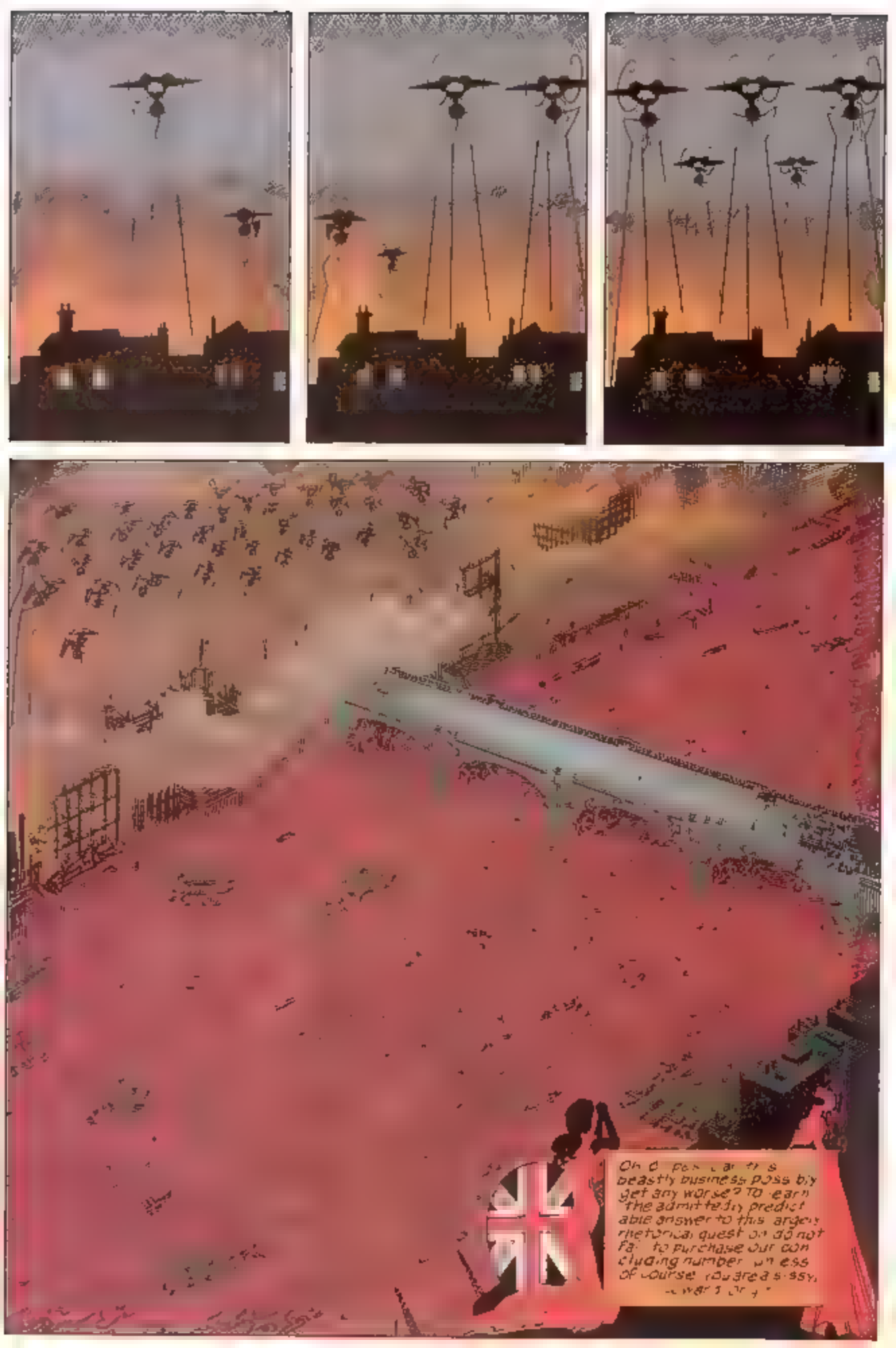
SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU DON T CARE FOR THE FELLER MUCH
INDEED ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING IT WAS HIS GEN US THAT GAVE YOU INDEPENDENT WIFE

HIS GENIUS? WHAT JEKYLL?
Hur hur Hurrr
JEKYLL S A FLINCHING LITTLE PRESBYTERIAN SPINSTER FRIGHTENED BY HIS OWN ERECTIONS HE S PROBABLY DOOMED US BOTH

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I MEAN BY HRRONCHE ... BY SEPARATING US IN THE FIRST PLACE, ALL BECAUSE HE WANTED TO BE PURE
YOU ARE AN IDIOT

HE WAS A DOCTOR, WASN'T HE? I SHOULD'VE THOUGHT HE'D NOT HAVE MANY SINS TO PURGE
EXACTLY! EXACTLY!
FIRST SENSIBLE THING YOU'VE SAID
SHOULD I TELL YOU WHAT THEY WERE EH? THESE EVILS HE WAS SO DESPERATE TO GET RID OF?
WELL HE'D ONCE STOLEN A BOOK
MORE BORROWED AND NEVER RETURNED BUT STILL
OH, AND HE PLAYED WITH HIMSELF SOMETIMES WHILE HE THOUGHT ABOUT OTHER MEN
THAT'S ABOUT IT
ANYWAY WHAT THE SILLY BASTARD DID, HE THOUGHT IF HE QUARANTINED ALL THESE BAD PARTS, WHAT WAS LEFT WOULD BE A******G ANGEL.
HUH HUH
HANG ON IF YOU'RE TH S CHAP S SIN'S, HOW DID YOU END UP SO BLOODY BIG?
GOOD POINT 'CHLOP.'
THAT'S A VERY GOOB POIMP
I MEAN WHEN I STARTED OUT, GOOD GOD, I WAS PRACTICALLY A****** DWARF
JEKYLL ON THE OTHER HAND A GREAT BIG STRAPPING FELLOW
SINCE THEN THOUGH, MY GROWTH'S BEEN UNRESTRICTED, WHILE HE'S WASTED AWAY TO NOTHING.
OBVIOUS, REALLY
WITHOUT ME, YOU SEE TEKYLL HAS NO DRIVES
AND W THOUT HIM, I HAVE NO RESTRAINTS.
GREAT GODS
HYDE
YOU ARE WOUNDED


MMMHM? OH NO NO. THIS ISN'T MINE
THIS IS GRIFFIN'S IT PROBABLY MEANS HE'S JUST THIS MOMENT PASSED AWAY HE'S IN THE LIBRARY
DON'T I MENTION IT?
THE ... THE LIBRARY?
HUH I SAY, THAT LOOKS RATHER MARVELLOUS, DOESN'T IT LIKE A DAGUERREOTYPE DEVELOPING
ANYWAY WHERE WAS I?
OH YES, THAT'S RIGHT NO RESTRAINTS THAT'S WHY I'M SO BIG
SO DO YOU STILL FANCY YOU'VE KILLED LORDS AND PATHANS UGLIER THAN ME?
AAAAHNN!
HYDE!
BECAUSE YOU KNOW I'D BE WILLING TO WAGER FIVE POUNDS THAT YOU HAVEN'T
MAD ANIMAL, WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
YOU ARE THE SHIT OF THE WORLD! I SHALL KILL YOU NOW
CAPTAIN NO SIR DON'T!
UNHAND ME THAT HORROR SHALL NOT LIVE A MOMENT LONGER!
NO, AND NOR WILL WE!
HURRUH HE'S RIGHT NEMO AND YOU KNOW IT
NOW, SIT DOWN AND FINISH YOUR SUPPER


Oh dear, what a beastly business. Can't get any worse? To earn the admittedly predictable answer to this arguably rhetorical question do not fail to purchase our concluding number, unless of course you're a sissy. -Wart Jr.

Chapter Five
Asia and the Australias
Visions of Cathay

supernatural phenomena,

increased concern at the idea of hostile, alien dimensions bordering our own

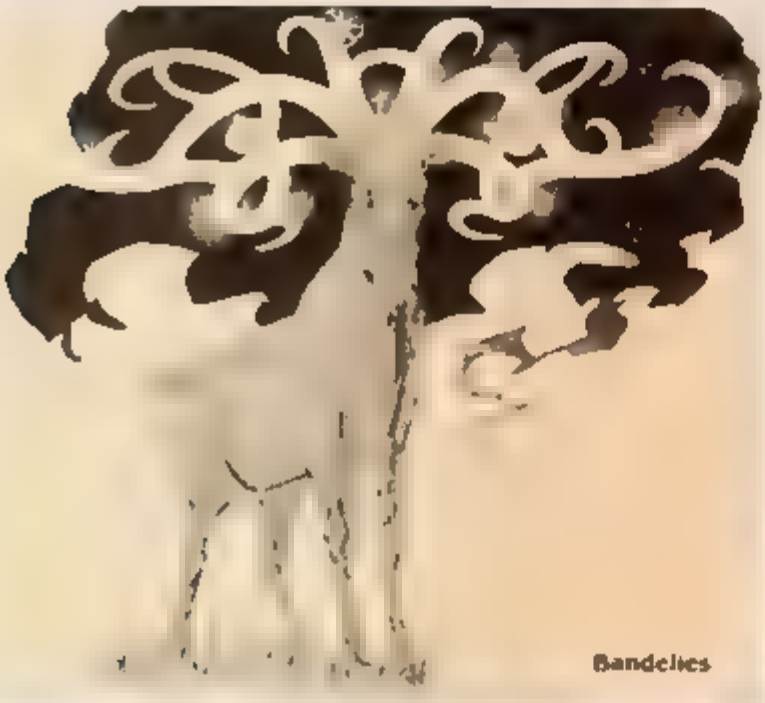
of 1901 for exam-

Oxford mental institution where the sole survivor of an expedition into these alarming territories during the 1870s, this being the Reverend Dr Eric Bellman, was confined 1902 saw Quatermain and Murray visiting the shores of Ireland, possibly as part of

branch of humanity who in the later nineteenth century still possessed a culture both enlightened and extensive Sadly, by our current year of 1930, it appears that native Erewhonians are all but extinct on the Australian mainland, with the few

ous existence in the dusty ruins of their once magnificent and proud civilization

North of Australia exists a massive spread of islands, ranging from the somewhat puritanical but bright dressed folk of Altruria in the far west, past the East Indies and New Guinea, on to savage Flotsam and the Mayan colony of Oxmal in the east Westward, just east of Altruria there is the island of



Bandelies

a good farmer's herd, thus we arrived outside the capital Mitendo, with its city walls that tower in height some thirty inches This, as Mistress Hill remarked, is scarcely level with her garte though she and my other colleagues marvelled greatly at the tiny native folk that milled upon the battlements, regarding us in panic Lilliput, it seems, is altered much since last I put by in those parts. Its miniscule inhabitants, I fear, have swifter briefer lives than we of greater stature, so that many generations may have passed within this score or so of years, and my first s forgotten or else naught but lege seemed plain that arrival was the cause of much distress amongst the populace, and so we left and made instead for Java

This largest island of the Indonesian chain was misidentified recently as 1753, called Bingfield's island by one William Bingfield, late of England Shipwrecked here and unaware that this was Java, he imagined he'd discovered it and named the island for himself Here we put in and visited the kingdom of Melinde, being fortu- journey there during a lull in its incessant slave-trade war with neighbouring Ganze and going on from here came to Kronomo, a walled city-kingdom some five miles its circumference to the isle's south-east. Near here we searched for some sight of the fierce and shaggy Dog birds that once occupied this territory (which Mr Bumppo hoped to shoot) but left without a glimpse supposing that these fabulous meat-eating beasts must all be dead Southeast of Java we came by the massive island of Australia and were much perplexed, this was clearly not the much famous landmass of that investigating, we discovered separate countries, the most easterly known as Sporoumbia, with its capital city Sporoundia apparently inhabited entirely by those born deformed or monstrous Neighbouring Sevarambia. to the west, was much more civilised and pleasing and we were delighted, after being disappointed by the Dog bird, to encounter many species of the unique local fauna, notably the bandelies, a large, goatheaded deer, quite like a maneless horse but with fantastic horns of what seemed glass, which we at length persuaded Mr Bumppo not to take as trophies

ourneying up around the east most tip of Java we passed first by Pathan where trees grow honey meal and wine, and where giant reeds with jewels clasped at their roots are used to build both homes and ships. Next we struck northward, past New Guinea on our starboard bow, while off to port we saw both Pala where the potent moksha fungus may be found, and ol rich New Guinea we passed through the pork-sausage creatures called andoulles are said to roam in strings, nourishing themselves by supping from the many mustard streams which course there Heading east we moored quite Cuffycoat's Island, home of eloquent orang-utans and barbarous cannibals, where in the night a shoal of local mermaids swam up alongside, to pester Mistress Hill and Mrs Blakeney with incessant questions to what the latest ladies' fashions were that might be found in Europe In the morning we pressed onwards past the towering volcanic island of Manoba to the south, and also sighted off New Guinea's eastern coast the great island Bensalem, that traded with Atlantis and where monkeys have been trained to sweep the streets by recourse to a brain-improvement process called suturization. Some way off Bensalem we could also see the lonely isle of Uffa, and a place that local seafarers have told us has been lately settled by the shipwrecked family of a Swiss pastor, named by them New Switzerland

We next went north, since it is my intent to take our fellowship as far as wondrous Balnibarbi and Laputa On our way we skirted Yoka Island, with its shaven-headed samurai and the extensive island commonwealth of Oceana its rich culture a result of being frequently invaded by the Romans and the Teutons Further on, we came at last to the familiar waters of whereby we dropped our anchor and next went ashore to be most graciously received by the isle's governor (who may have been a son of the man holding this position when I last was in these parts, or else that eminence himself somehow kept young by magic. If it is this last. then I confess it for a talent should not much mind myself) The governor is still empowered to command the spectral dead as servants, and still willing to oblige a favoured guest by summoning the spirit of his or her choice Though I entreated my companions to refuse this generous offer, Mr Blakeney was most adamant, insisting on the company of a revered and ancient ancestor from his own lineage. When conjured. this shade proved to be not wholly the aristocratic personage of Blakeney family legend, but instead the spirit of a one-eyed horse thief with a desperate mania for public self-pollution. Disheartened with the vision of his heritage provided by this squinting, pizzle-waving apparition, Mr Blakeney fast succumbed to melancholia, insisting that we sail without delay on the next morning's tide

"Thus we came to the larger isle of Luggnagg, further north, and the opportunity to introduce my fellows to a doleful looking Struldbrugg that we met upon the beach He looked to be in middle life as many Struldbruggs do, but as the coin sized spot near his left brow had darkened to its deepest black he may well have been several hundred years in age. Despised and envied by Luggnagg's mortal largely solitary existence, and the fellow we encountered seemed mistrustful of our questions. Asked about the origins of his deathless condition, he replied after consideration that he thought his immortality and brow-mark both traits he and his kind had inherited from long-distant forebear, said in legend to have been a visitor to Luggnagg, from distant Abyssinia, where informant thought there might exist a city of undying folk like he. When remarked I thought it likelier

this Afric city of immortals be no more than wistful myth, our Struldbrugg friend became offended and stormed off along the surf-line, no more to be seen, whence we sailed on, passing Tracoda to the east, where the cave-dwelling natives speak in hisses like the serpents that provide their staple diet. East of Tracoda, I have heard, exist three islands named for their distinctly coloured sands, green, red, and black, where legend tells of monk-protected tunnels leading off to far Tibet, but these we had no leisure to investigate, and so with a good wind made north for Balnibarbi which we reached the following aftern

able and threatened to maroon me if we did not sail at once for less obtuse and more inviting climes, to which I most reluctantly gave my assent, and we made south again.

"We passed east of Zipang, or of Japan as it is these days called, and went south by way of Formosa, which possesses off its coast another smaller island of the same name where the women and the men go naked save for plaques of gold and silver. Further on, northwest of Borneo, we saw the mountain Tushuo rising from the sea with the gigantic peach-tree at its peak where once two famed ghost-catchers lived, and heading on passed b

er island, situated opposite a river-mouth in nearby Borneo. Protected by a reef it seemed fecund and full of life, yet to my knowledge it has never been explored nor named. We sailed on past the Isle of Salmasse where some trees grow meal while others drip a fearful venom, as on Pathan near to Java, and came likewise by the islands Raso (where men will be hung if they fall ill) and strange Macumeran, where the hound-headed populace adore their ox-god with unfathomable rituals and barking, howling incantations. Finally we reached the gulf of Siam mooring near the Isle of Tlilibel, a place that I myself had never visited yet which was recommended to me by my eldest son, John, who himself is something of a traveller, as with my various other children and descendants. Putting into shor

note, is every bit as hopeless and impoverished as when I saw it last, with the energies its populator might quite reasonably be expected to expend in growing food or building decent houses for themselves instead diverted to their endless stream of 'projects.' I observed how one such project, that of trying to extract sunlight from cucumbers, which I'd remarked upon during my previous visit, had since grown to a thriving indust with great cucumber-pale plantations to provide for it. I could not tell quite how much sunlight was yet manufactured by this nove process since it rained without cease all the time we were in Balnibarbi, but it may be there is something to it. My companions were by this time asking rancorously why I'd fetched them to this dismal place, upon which I invited them to risk the rain by tilting back their heads and zing upwards. Doing so, ey gasped as one.

"Above us, half-masked b the stormy grey from whic the pelting downpour fell there hung the dark mass of Laputa flying island homestead of the science-and-learning preoccupied Tomtoddies, as I've sometimes heard Laputans called. I told my comrades of Laputa s many marvels, of its striking and flirtatious women and its foods served up in musical or else mathematical shapes, but with there being no way we might

is in fact not isle at all but rather a mere egg of those colossal fowl, its tip protruding from these China seas. Nearby we saw another smal

descriptions fel wel short of the adventure that my fellows had been promised. They were very good and did not chaff me as we tramped back through the Balnibarbi towards our ship, although when I suggested we sail on and try to spot the anguage-obsessed island called Locuta that a son of mine once told me he had found, they grew less ami-

that our time amongst the short-lived Tribelans was peculiarly moving. Whilst the company of the immortal Struldbruggs can oftimes become dispiriting and lead the mind to a consideration of one's own mortality the Tribelans, who can talk when scarcely a day old, yet who die spent and ancient by the age of twenty, have an opposite effect, exciting the profoundest sympathy

"We stayed perhaps a month [illegible] grown to strong young children or to see a youthful beauty lose her bloom, then journeyed on round the Malay peninsula, through the Malacca straits into the Bay of Bengal. Here, in the northernmost expanses we discovered an enormous isle called India that clearly was not the more famed sub-continent known by that name which nearby a strange island where the trees seemed merely balls of cotton-wool glued onto posts, inhabited by animals in human dress, of which I must confess our Mr Bumppo bagged a couple. It transpired our island was in fact a Phoenix-governed Animal Republic, and it seemed expedient that we head on before the locals took exception to our young friend's sportsmanship Thus did we pass Mask

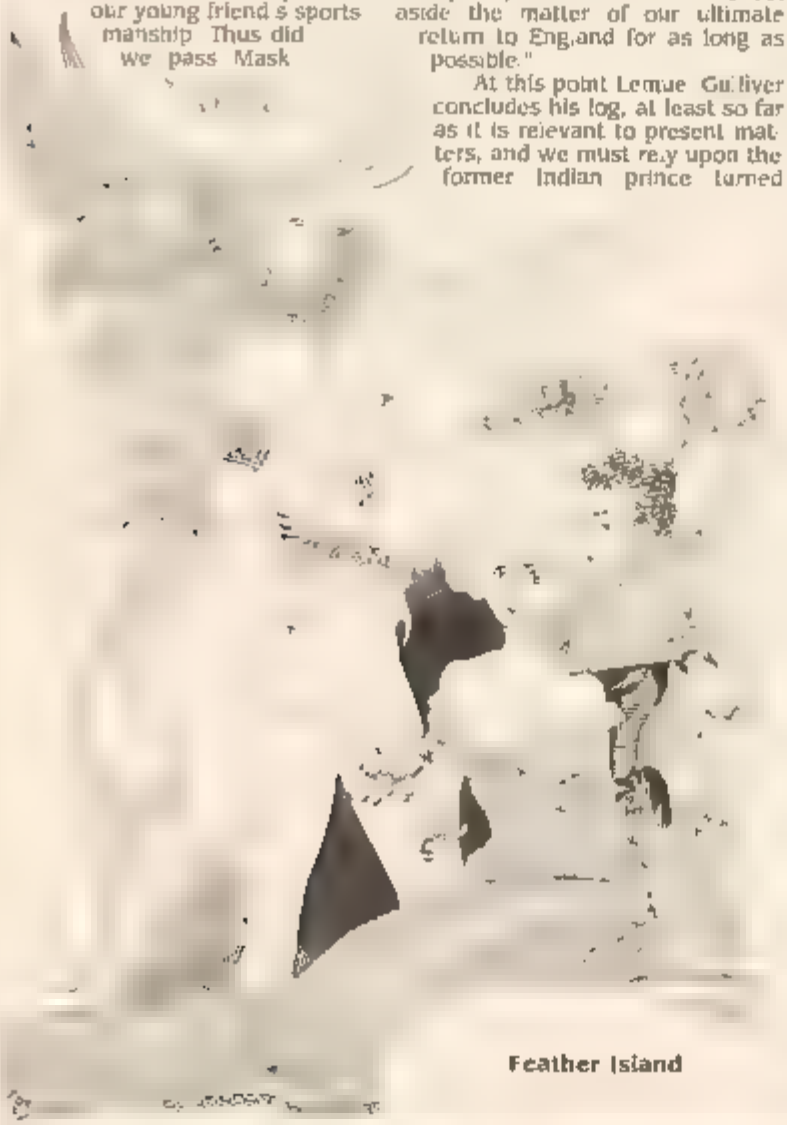
the King of Spain some years ago exiled his sister and her husband, the Viceroy of Catalonia, both the lovers cruelly fitted with an irremovable iron mask, and likewise sailed on by Sri Lanka. Here, I'm told, exists the kingdom of Agartha, veiled divinely from the memory of man, the throne of which is decorated with the figures of two million gods, with its existence central to the very continuity of mankind and but I confess that I have quite forgot the point I sought to make, or why I ever thought this place important

"Travelling on into the Indian Ocean, finally we put ashore on Feather Island only recently discovered by the noted French balloonist and philosopher, the Chevalier D'Etoile Here my companions were confronted by a veritable paradise so that they did not make against me any more complaint. Why, even Mistress Hill and Lady Blakeney seemed transfixed by all the flowers and perfumed air and crystal streams, nor any less by the exquisite beauty of the local women, with the long and trailing feathered plumes they have grown from their scalps instead of hair So perfect is this place, we are resolved to set aside the matter of our ultimate return to England for as long as possible."

At this point Lemuel Gulliver concludes his log, at least so far as it is relevant to present matters, and we must rely upon the former Indian prince turned science-pirate, Captain Nemo, for our notions of the Indian subcontinent itself In the first volume of his uncompleted memoirs, Nemo speaks of being taken by his father as a boy to visit Lomb, a city on the western coast of India near Mangalore, known for its pepper trade, its infant sacrifice, and the ox-worship that it has imported from Mauumeran. He comments witheringly on this beast-worship practiced by his countrymen, with reference to Goatland, just northwest of Lomb, where the red-bearded billy-goat is venerated, but he reserves his deepest scorn for the religious manias of Mabaron, a ten-day journey north of Lomb, where numerous pilgrims kill or mutilate themselves before the monstrous jewelled and golden idol-god of the False Christians Much more to the Captain's taste is Mancy, almost opposite to Mabaron on India's eastern coast, and he speaks warmly of its wealth, its culture and cuisine, especially of bignon, a fine wine produced in Cansay Mancy's lagoon-built "City of Heaven." Nemo also comments favourably upon the Pygmy Kingdom on the Dalay River just northeast of Mancy, where he marvels at the craftsmanship of the both short and short-lived natives. Likewise meeting his approval, we find Jundapur in the northwest, with its magnificent Palladian palace and its local legend of a woman who fell fatally in love with the disguised god Krishna there. The Sikh submariner, however speaks less fondly of the feared Black Jungle, on its island in the Ganges delta

"I recall my father and perhaps a score of his light cavalry taking me on a dreadful expedition for the purposes of strengthening my character and furthering my learning, starting out in the Black Jungle, on the delta island Raymangal, south of Calcutta. In amidst the lightless vegetation here we saw the dauntingly immense granite pagoda-sanctuary of the Thugs, its corners marked with effigies of three-headed Trimurti and its dome crowned with a towering woman-headed serpent Not far off, my father pointed out for me the banyan tree where is concealed the entrance to a deep cave of pink stone wherein are virgins strangled for the blessed goddess Ka Rather hastily I thought, we headed north from here and, passing by Calcutta, came upon the east shore of the Ganges to the more alluring and yet no less fearsome kingdom known as Gangaridia Here, father said, were talking animals come from the nearby Animal Republic in the Bay of Bengal, who lived in harmony with local shepherds, peaceful people who did not eat flesh, but who in battle made ferocious warriors by virtue of their mounts, fierce talking unicorns that once impaled ten thousand of the King of India's war-elephants in the defence of their diamond-rich territory

"We went on north from here and



Feather Island

came after a time, by night, into the Sacred Valley, beyond the Great Rungit Valley, on the border. Making our way down into the valley by a most precarious path involving stone steps, tunnels, and a metal ladder, we walked for an hour and so came to the famed Temple of Kali with its moat of crocodiles, illuminated by vast flaming braziers set to each side of its massive doors. The valley and its many smaller temples were breathtaking in the moonlight, but yet we elected to pass on and not make camp until we'd gained its further side. Here, in the morning, looking north, we saw the River Physon in its devil-haunted valley that is said to be a way to Hell, and heard the distant yet incessant sound of fiendish drums and trumpets with which that dire valley ever rings. Beyond it, father told me, was a nameless isle whereon lived giants, each as tall as five like him, while further northward yet were women who had precious stones for eyes, that they might slay men as the basilisk doth. Off to the north-west, he said, there was the inland ocean bordering Cathay wherein was found the island kingdom of Pentexoire, governed once by the immortal Prester John. More westward still, he told me, in the wilds of Bactria were many griffins, of which a few sparse although still fearsome flocks might yet be spotted as far south as Hyderabad during their great irregular migrations. Also he spoke of the Dream Kingdom, near to Bactria, its great wall keeping pure a culture based on dreams, with a cloudy capital where neither sun nor moon had ever shone. So it was, my mind alive with all these sights, that we struck out for home."

Nemo's account with its brief reference to Pentexoire, leads us indirectly to the writings of ambiguous long-term League associate Orlando, who was him or herself colleague to Pentexoire's Prester John and who was travelling in Asia during 1906.

"Can this really be the twentieth century already? I suppose it must be, for I found myself dressed in the most absurd silk skirt and hat, stepping carefully on my raised heels down the gangway of the massive, dirty steamer that had brought me here to Zipang, or Japan as I expect I must get used to calling it, arriving in the port of Nagasaki. On our way here from Formosa across the East China Sea we passed Alcina's Island, near to Japan's coast, where I once travelled some five hundred years ago. Our captain, whom I think was rather taken with me, said that some descendants of the sorceress Alcina's monster army (centaurs, dog-men and the like) could still be found there, roaming in the hills albeit in a great state of degeneration.

"Putting in to Nagasaki, I'm relieved to say the place is still almost as beautiful as I recall. The rather pretty lady managing my rooming house sat up with me into [illegible] the city's recent history, including the sad tale of a young local beauty, Cho-cho-san, with family still living in the nearby streets, who'd killed herself some few years after her desertion by the handsome U.S. Naval officer she'd married in the early 1890s. Very sad, I must say. My hostess and I were by now quite drunk from warmed rice wine, and I may have said something rather forward when, in an attempted compliment, I compared her more slender figure favourably with my own. She laughed delightfully and said that I was flirting with her, warning me that I should take care not to visit Titipu, a nearby town where the local Mikado had decreed that such flirtation was a crime that merited beheading. When I told her that my steamer sailed for China in the morning and that I should have no time to visit anywhere, much less be executed, she insisted I'd had too much sake and should be tucked up in bed at once, which shortly later I suppose I was, after a fashion.

"The next day I said my farewells then put to sea once more, bound for Shanghai. On our way we passed by the minor continent Hsuan, where in 90 BC the Emperor Wu Ti revived the lately-dead by burning incense, and sailed on by those two enticing isles, Babilary, whereon women rule, and Women's Island, where there are no men at all. At length we reached Shanghai, and I set out to reacquaint myself with China, an old friend whose spiced perfume and beguiling ways I have not known for far too long. The first place that I went to was Albraca, near the Russian border in the far northeast, that once was the proud fortress-capital of Galafrone's kingdom. I stood there amongst the tall grass and the massive tumbled stones that are now all that remaining of those times, and let the wuthering breeze pluck at my yellow dress, my chestnut hair. I thought about Angelica, Galafrone's daughter of the lips and breasts and thighs that drove me once to madness, as they did so many knights of Charlemagne. I killed the King of Tartary for her back in the 1480s. Where have all those wars and passions gone that seemed then so important?

"To be honest, being in Albraca made me rather weepy and it was with some relief that I struck south once more, shortly arriving in Peking, which, like Nagasaki, is refreshingly but little changed since last I saw it. It was to the city's newly built (at least to me) museum that I went however eager for a sight of the peculiar exhibit that has been displayed there since the last years of the nineteenth century. This, in its very up-to-date glass case, is quite extraordinary. It appears to be a man-like monkey or perhaps an ape-like man, and has been thought by some of the distinguished scientists come from England to examine it to be one of the 'missing links' from Mr Darwin's entertaining theory. This idea, to me, seemed quite preposterous. For one thing, it would seem that this unusual animal is stuffed, and is thus only some few hundred years of age at very best. If this alone did not sufficiently rule out a prehistoric origin for the exhibit, I should also point out that the monkey-man is dressed in what seemed to be the traditional Chinese costume of the eighteenth century, its colours faded and its gorgeous fabrics now distressed with age. A signboard placed within the cabinet identified this strangely noble beast, in Chinese characters, as 'Great Sage, Equal to Heaven' though even after I'd painstakingly translated this, I was left none the wiser.

"Enquiries that I made amongst the local market traders indicated that at least according to their great-grandparents, the ape-human was in fact a minor god of sorts, who had his origins upon an island in the nearby Yellow Sea, where he

had reigned as Monkey King upon his Mountain of Flowers and Fruit. Asked about the isle's precise location, they could only tell me that it was not far from P'eng Lai, an enchanted vase-shaped island where it was alleged Taoist immortals lived, described to their immediate forebears by a famous wandering storyteller called Kai Lung during the nineteenth century. When asked about P'eng Lai, of course, all they would say was that it was close to the island where the Mount of Flowers and Fruit stood. They did, however, mention that the monkey-creature had at some remote point in the past transgressed against the gods so that they bound him for some several thousand years beneath a peak known as Five Element Mountain, some miles to the southwest of Peking, which I resolved to set out and investigate upon the following day.

"Upon my way there, I passed through a dreadful city called Perinthia, apparently built upon strict astrological precepts to mirror the heavens. By dint of maintaining their zodiacal isolation, however, the whole population is grossly inbred, with Perinthia peopled by monsters in direct result. If Perinthia genuinely reflects Heaven, then we must suppose that the gods there are three-headed hunchbacks with several club-feet. I travelled on, although Five Element Mountain, when I reached it, seemed rather a ordinary edifice, and I elected simply to meander on, as has so often been my way during this strange, ferocious, and amusing thus-far-endless life of mine. I went as far north as the border with Mongolia, where, walking in the desert by the failing light of day, I reached a place called Watcher's Corner where a monstrous and mournful creature paces back and forth, forever with one fretful eye on the horizon. When I asked the creature what it watched for, it began a long, depressing story that concerned a friendly camel with a burning candle set upon each hump, though I confess that I grew bored and stole away not halfway through the telling.

"Some distance further west I saw the mountain Waiting Wife said to have once been a young woman watching for her husband gone by all that waiting. I wondered idly if she had been petrified by her own tears, then headed south, passing the towering scaffold-city of Isaura with its pulleys and its buckets, raised above the thousand weirs of its deep-buried lake, where the religion is divided between those who think divinity resides in the well-depths and those who think divinity, in fact, is in the ever rising buckets. I continued south, and after some great while reached Gala, an agreeably appointed kingdom which, however, I must with considerable distaste report, collects funds from its populace without taxation by resorting to a public lottery. Perhaps this is a tax upon the credulous, in which case I suppose that I broadly agree with it. From Gala I went down and into Indo-China, where, amongst the jungles of Cambodia, I saw the tunnel-riddled but majestic city of Phom Dhek, its neatly-tended gardens rising from the shrieking, growling greenery, and not far off saw also great Lodldhapura, Phom Dhek's rival city, with its royal family [illegible]

[illegible] far more swiftly than you'd think, I soon struck north again through Burma, where near Mandalay I ventured in Gramblamble Land and [illegible] lifted the famous city Tosh, beside Lake Pipple-popple. Here, again, I demonstrated my perhaps allowable taste for museums by visiting the great Municipal Museum where the elders of the major animal clans once existing locally are kept preserved by brandy, vinegar and cayenne pepper in ridiculously huge glass bottles.

"From Gramblamble Land I ventured north across the Southwest Wilderness, where sugar canes are thicker than a man in girth and grow almost a thousand feet in height. I must stress that while camping in this wilderness I did *not* kill and eat a local form of rabbit called a 'lying-beast' or 'rumour' that spreads stories and, when its delicious somewhat-chicken-flavoured flesh is eaten, will compel the eater to tell lies. Once past these endless wastelands I continued to the northwest and so came at last upon the Himalayan foothills, which I knew marked the beginnings of Tibet. Although I did not know it then, they also marked the start of some six months of wild adventure in amongst those ancient, mystic hills. I had a dreadful time kept as a hostage at a monastery of sinister Bon sorcerers, a place called So Sa Ling, where young men were dissolved alive to make an ointment, granting everlasting life, which the magicians then rubbed on. Since I am not a young man at this current time, I did not end up as an embrocation but was kept instead for other purposes which, whilst only slightly more pleasant, at least in the end afforded me an opportunity to make good my escape. After some days further travel I beheld Mount Tsintsin-Dagh, the lamasery of the Silent Brothers there atop its pinnacle. The mountain's waters, I have heard, contain a kind of radiant energy bestowing health and life which made me think of that blue pool which made me as I am, awa[illegible] in what is now called the Britis[illegible] Protectorate of Uganda. I did not visit Tsintsin-Dagh, however, but pressed on ahead.

"By this means I came firstly to True Lhassa, where the soil is rich in [illegible] amonds and the river almost slimy with gold sediment. Though I have heard the Buddhist holy city here is truly heavenly, with its enormous gold and purple palace of the current Dalai Lama, I have also heard that by the very virtue of True Lhassa's sacred nature all outsiders will be put immediately to death and so decided to continue onward and likewise continue in my current incarnation for a time since in all honesty I've grown quite fond of it [illegible] that I find myself at present sporting. For not unrelated reasons, I also avoided the mysterious cloudy valley just north of True Lhassa, where two rival cults of sorcerors (or perhaps more-than-human supernatural forces) called the White Lodge and the Black Lodge are believed to be at war, with human souls and freakish twilight entities both as their pawns. Thus it was that at last I came to the lovely valley in the shade of the blue mountain called Mount Karakal where is the beautiful bronze-dragon-decorated lamasery of Shangri-La. Here I was welcomed by the long-lived holy men who seemed to see in me some form of kindred spirit, possibly due to my own longevity, although I was [illegible] of their faith.

"This does not mean, of course, that I might not at some point be persuaded to conversion. I was both surprised and pleased to note the healthy reverence which this form of Tibetan Buddhism affords the sexual act, and was some weeks into a most agreeable course of instruction [illegible] our idyll was disturbed by the arrival of new travellers in the area. This turned out to be a very handsome couple who, being dressed in clothing too warm for wear during the day and far too cold to wear at night, could be determined at first glance to both be English. With closer inspection, though, they both proved much more interesting. Both had that quality, a kind of inner radiance that I have often been said to possess myself, and which I have come to associate with those like I who've found another lease of life. [illegible] Stranger still, it turned out that by some coincidence they are affiliated to that League in service to the British Crown, that I have found my destiny entwined with more than [illegible] the centuries. The rather dashing gentleman, it seems, goes by the name of Allan while his utterly enchanting young companion in her pretty scarf was intro[illegible]

At this juncture, where the astute reader will have guessed the journal of Orlando to converge with the promised account of Quatermain and Murray's travels in the Orient, we should perhaps return to that pair, who, the reader will remember, were deployed to Russia by their masters during 1906 in an effort to affirm a di[illegible] link prior to the Anglo-Russian pact relating to Afghanistan, Tibet and Persia. Mina Murray's journal tells the story of their travels after they arrived at the port of St. Petersburg, now Lenungrad, in the late March of that eventful [illegible]

"Going by coach out of St

Petersburg we rattled first through Dodon's kingdom, with the only bright spot in its shabby capital being the golden weathercock atop the city's highest steeple. This, we're told, was once alive, allowing Dodon's kingdom to thrive in peace and prosperity by warning them of any coming danger. When I said I thought that this was tosh, Allan replied that Tosh was actually a city in the heart of Burma. Much as I adore him he can be intensely irritating when he thinks he's being humorous. Heading on to Moscow we gave a wide berth to Pauk, a large place with a desperate atmosphere that's not unlike that of a dirty bathroom, where there is reported to reside a horrid spider bigger than a man, so ghastly that those brought to Pauk spend the remainder of their miserable lives clinging together as they weep in horror at the scampering of this vile apparition. Not, strictly speaking, quite my cup of tea, and so we carried on to Moscow where we were most courteously received by one of the Tsar's ministers and given generous accommodation in a fine hotel.

"Our intimate relations on that night, while I believe they seemed to both of us a little jaded, were at least conducted briskly and with a sufficient vigour to plunge both of us into a long, deep sleep, during which I endured a dreadful, muddled dream where I appeared to be in Moscow, although not the Moscow of our present day, but rather as it might be in, say, twenty years or so. There was some nonsense that concerned a large black talking cat, and a well-dressed man that according to the logic of the dream I knew to be the Devil. I awoke quite unrefreshed, and Allan and I went for breakfast with the minister who met us yesterday. He told us we may travel unrestrictedly in Russia and its neighbouring territories, which we told him was a journey we were both much looking forward to, intending to set out next day.

"With all of Russia to explore, we first agreed to visit those locations in this westernmost extreme of Russia, down the Black Sea's east coast to the Caspian. We headed south from Moscow, passing by the wretched remnants of the town of Gloupov, ruined by the ongoing historic imbecility of its inhabitants. (Gloupov means 'stupid,' so we are reliably informed.) Journeying on, we travelled through the large, apparently borderless town of Ibansk which, though its architecture is bewilderingly elaborate, seems as inane as Gloupov for the way in which it manages its day-to-day affairs, and also for the hit-and-miss, near catastrophic nature of its general history. In fact, one might quite justifiably remark that many of these western Russian towns are not distinguished save by their incredible stupidity. Take Paflagonia, for example, with its half-baked penal system where the guilty are somehow convinced to flagellate themselves; or nearby Blackstaff which is governed by a strange, capricious fairy that attends to children's christenings; or else Crim Tartary where the most senior families have names like Spinachi, Broccoli and Sauerkraut. Upon the other hand, however, I must say that our ride through the city Phyllis seemed to offer fascinating views at every turn, though I am told that should one stay within the city too long it becomes a dismal blur where one can barely bother to distinguish between light and shade.

"Just as intriguing was the city of Despina on the Black Sea's northern coast. Apparently, if it's approached by camel via the desert it looks very like a massive ship, while should it be approached by ship across the sea, it looks much like the hind end of a camel. Just east of Despina, in the Tartary Desert, we saw from far off the fortress Bastiani, but did not go close enough to get more than a faint impression of its size nor its impregnability. It stands upon the edge of Abcan, a wide territory in constant darkness due to Abcan's emperor persecuting Christians. Much smaller, and more to my taste, a little further south we found the sprawl of caverns, rocks and whirlpools wherein the poetic dreamer Alastor maintained his cave-retreat, and where his tomb still stands o'ergrown by ivy in a mountain recess. More southerly still we passed through the land of Gondour, where the Caliph rules a system in which, whilst even the lowest peasant has one vote, those of a greater social standing may have two, or fifty, or a hundred. Crossing to the Caspian ocean's eastern shore, we next spent some time travelling in Amazonia, or Feminy, a land of women which extends from here into the west of China, where men are still frowned upon, though not as much as they were by the fierce, one-breasted warrior women who were the initial founders of this territory.

"North of Feminy we passed through Ivanikha, where the peasantry are all named Ivan, and, crossing the boundless, junk-filled country known as 'X' (presumably because this run-down place could not afford more than one letter for its name) came finally into a province called the Land of Wonder. Here, amongst a friendly population of red-headed Jews, we saw the splendid palace, Faithstone, in the capital, and were delighted by the nightingales that sang at dusk from sagging branches in fruit-heavy

trees. We next went east, passing the half-constructed city Thekla, where the builders, who are using the star-spattered heavens as their blueprint, are apparently delaying the completion of their city so as to further put off the start of its destruction. Similarly half-done was the nearby city Morlana, which seemed at first sight all made from glass and crystal and translucent alabaster, with the sun's last rays at play in a sublime aquarium dapple on its coral columns and its massive chandeliers. The city is completely without depth, however, something like a stage flat or facade, and passing on its far side one sees only creaking wooden struts and filthy sheets of corrugated tin. Eudoxia, a little further east, conversely, first appeared to be a senseless maze of streets and passages, but when we were shown the carpet (possibly of divine origin) in which all Eudoxia is represented in the swirls and arabesques, we saw a near-celestial order to the place which made us almost sad to leave. Nearby Zemrude was more ambiguous: I was myself in quite a decent mood as we passed through, and, looking upward, only saw the airy balconies, the saffron curtains billowing. Allan, however, rather in a sulk about the rut our sexual passions would seem to have fallen into, only saw the fish-heads in the gutters, the cracked pavements and the choked-up drains.

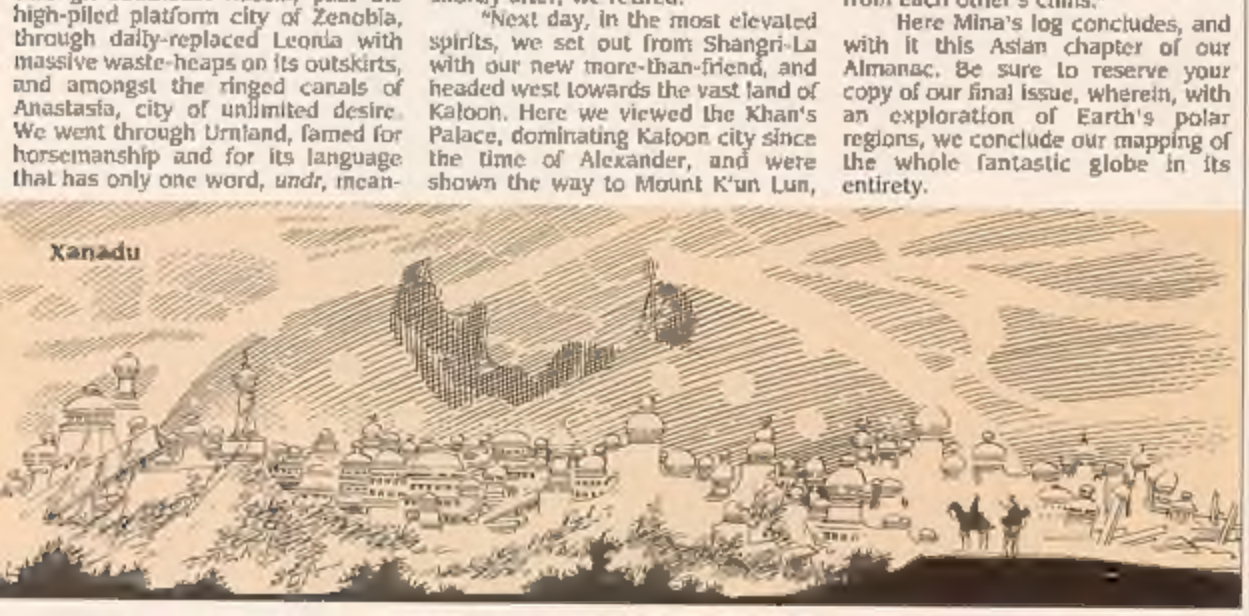
"Octavia, in the northeast, is a fragile cobweb-city of rope walkways strung across a chasm, while further on Valdrada, built above a lake, seemed no more real than its perfect reflection, hung eternally inverted in the waters at the city's base. From here we headed south to Vladivostok, passing through the Land of the Goat Worshippers, goatskin-clad savages who loan their wives to strangers, and saw fabled Xanadu, wild vegetation bursting upwards through the holes in its long-ruined pleasure dome. Here we turned back and travelled west through southeast Russia, past the high-piled platform city of Zenobia, through daily-replaced Leonia with massive waste-heaps on its outskirts, and amongst the ringed canals of Anastasia, city of unlimited desire. We went through Urnland, famed for horsemanship and for its language that has only one word, *undr*, meaning 'wonder,' before moving on into Mongolia itself. We saw Mount Poyang, with its dog-flesh eating deity, and travelled over buried Argia, where soil replaces air and empty space replaces solid things, so coming into China. We went southwards through Eusapia, which has a subterranean double of itself built underneath it where the fragile dead are housed in buried versions of their homes, and crossed into Tibet where after some time we came to a glorious blue mountain with a valley spread beyond it. Here we found the exquisite lamasery called Shangri-La, arriving to discover one aged lama in flagrante with the loveliest girl I've ever seen. She is, I think, an Englishwoman, at least currently. Her name's Orlando.

"That first night, the three of us drank wine and talked and talked. Some of the things she told us I cannot repeat, but let us say that we three found we had a great affinity between us, having travelled to a lot of the same places, such as central southern Africa, for instance. Furthermore, we learned that she was not entirely unfamiliar with our currently-depleted League and had indeed, by means which I may not explain, known at least two groups of our predecessors. Our talk turned in general to longevity, and we discussed both Prester John, who had a kingdom to the west of here and whom Orlando knew, apparently, and also Queen Ayesha, believed by Orlando to be at present incarnated in the land of Kaloon, also to the west. A little drunk, we vowed to visit both these places with her, then discussed the wider moral and aesthetic issues of a greatly increased lifespan. She smiled, a little wickedly, and said that one's perspectives change, perhaps, across the centuries. As she said, *'it becomes a question not of whether one will ever try a thing, but when.'* We sat a while in pleasurable and intoxicated silence after this, and then Orlando gave first Allan then myself the sweetest goodnight kisses, and then, shortly after, we retired.

"Next day, in the most elevated spirits, we set out from Shangri-La with our new more-than-friend, and headed west towards the vast land of Kaloon. Here we viewed the Khan's Palace, dominating Kaloon city since the time of Alexander, and were shown the way to Mount K'un Lun, sometimes called Hes or Fire Mountain, further west. Here there resides, apparently, either the incarnated goddess Isis, or alternately (according to Mount K'un Lun's Chinese neighbours), Hsi Wang Mu, the Royal Mother of the West, who gained her immortality, allegedly, by fornicating some three thousand youths to death. Orlando spoke quite wistfully about a gathering of immortals said to happen every three thousand years or so atop the mountain's peak, where the undying meet to eat the peaches of eternal life, but said that she had never witnessed this. She also said that she believed Isis or Hsi Wang Mu to be instead another incarnation of Ayesha, though she thought it best that we did not investigate since K'un Lun was believed to be protected by a human-headed tiger named Lu Wo.

"We travelled on instead west from Kaloon through Chitor. Here we saw the Victory Tower, where an insubstantial creature known as the A Bao A Qu will follow the ascendants, gathering form and visibility with each completed step. Only if the climber has reached spiritual perfection will the creature gain the topmost step and full embodiment, however, and Orlando said that this had only happened once. We went on with her through the lovely Kingdoms of Radiant Array and Joyous Groves, north of the Himalayas, thus avoiding the ill-favoured Kingdom of Myriad Lights, and came, past China's western border, to that guttering inland ocean said to flow from Paradise, with its magnetic rocks of adamand, where the island Pentexoire is located. Here, Orlando said, lived Prester John before he went to Nubia and called himself Senapho. She showed us, in the poignant ruins of his kingdom, Trees of Sun and Moon that spoke with Alexander once, foretelling his demise, and we three lounged delightfully beneath them, gorging on their fruit, said to provide five hundred years of life. All three of us ate dozens, laughing as we wiped juice from each other's chins."

Here Mina's log concludes, and with it this Asian chapter of our Almanac. Be sure to reserve your copy of our final issue, wherein, with an exploration of Earth's polar regions, we conclude our mapping of the whole fantastic globe in its entirety.



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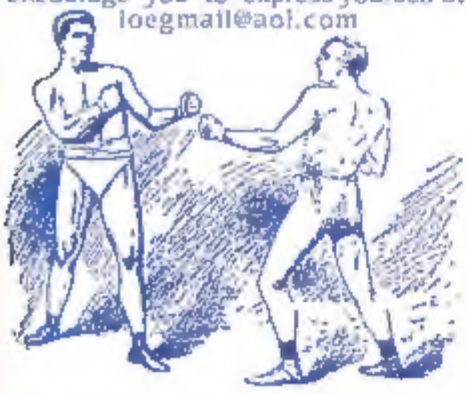

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